2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4
Upper Burma
Lower Burma

423 distinctions are more minute than is at all necessary or indeed
428 comprehensible. They include all children born out of wed-
848 lock, among whom are reckoned such as are born before the parents have been married ten months; all children that are
[597] purchased, or adopted by any other ceremony than that of abadita or keiktima; and such as "from respect or affection
423 style their guardians father or mother." The settlement of
184 boundary marks was one of the earliest duties of the first ruler. The thale rice became constantly scarcer and scarcer, and it was determined that it would be well to give every person his share and mark it off distinctly. The appointment of persons to execute this duty was the first occasion on which executive officials were found necessary. Manu enumerated twenty-five objects suitable for legal landmarks. These included all natural objects, such as lakes, rivers, ridges, and hills, remarkable large trees and clumps of bamboos; artificial boundaries of an equally permanent character, such as pagodas, shrines for demon-worship, zayats, or rest-houses, stone pillars and sacred posts, wells and cairns; finally such singular distinguishing marks as heads of cattle, chaff, ashes, charcoal, sand, broken earthenware vessels, and men's bones. "Beating the bounds," one would think, must have been very necessary with the younger members of the household in the case of such perishable boundary lines as could be constituted by chaff, or even sand. In Upper Burma the cultivating
[161] population was so sparse that no difficulty was found in the matter of boundaries. In Lower Burma farms are as distinctly marked off as land-surveyors' chains can effect the operation in pointing out the little raised ridges which separate the plots of paddy land from one another. Nevertheless they are hardly such as the South of England farmers would approve.

423 These allodial tenures are the only ones which exist in
[177-92] Burma now. In independent territory there were two other
651 kinds of holding, which were not, however, very numerous or
● 422 extensive. The first of these were called thugyisa fields, and consisted of certain tracts of land near the town or village set apart for the maintenance of the headman. As that official was anything but a permanency, the tenant for the time being very seldom cultivated them himself, but let them

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

out to farmers, who were required not only to pay him his rent, but as a rule had also to supply the revenue demanded from the owner by the State. There was therefore no very enthusiastic bidding for his lands, but he always got a tenant somehow or other. It would have been a bad day for the village if no one came forward. Every man in the place would have been called upon to work for a certain period on the thugyi's paddy-fields. These have now been merged in the State lands.

The third class of arable estates consisted of the lands known as bhanda, treasury, or royal fields. These were the private property of the king, and were cultivated ordinarily by the outcast lamaing, crown predial slaves. Sometimes, however, the whole of the farmers in the neighbourhood were summoned by roster to do their one, or three, or five days' work, for which they received no payment; on the contrary, if they tried to escape they were tied up and received a dozen or two according to the humanity of the district governor. Near the capital, where oppression never was so gross as in the outlying provinces, the cultivators of the Lèdawgyi were frequently freed from all taxation but the payment of the family tax, and some even, as in the neighbourhood of Aungbinle, whose revenues were assigned by the king to the great Arakan pagoda, were let off even the ngwedaw. But these *corvées* were very irksome, for the payment of a little money would always ensure the omission of a name from the taikthugyi's list, and the work fell all the harder on the luckless remainder. The whole of the produce of the bhanda lands belonged of course to the king, unless where he had otherwise assigned it. What with revenue paid in kind and the crops of the Lèdawgyi, the king had granaries as vast as those which Joseph built for the king of Egypt. Mindôn Min drew from them to pay his soldiery, varying the monotony from time to time with pieces of rotten Manchester grey shirting. Offerings to the Sacred Order, of whom he daily fed several thousands, also served to keep the storehouses within reasonable bounds. Thibaw Min turned his grain into money with all possible expedition, and the money vanished with equal rapidity. The Lèdaw of course became State land on the Annexation.

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

to hold his land free from taxes for such a period as may be necessary to bring it into a thorough state of cultivation. In such a case as this he has to apply to the thugyi—the old hereditary officers being retained throughout British Burma —of his circle, if the land does not exceed five acres in extent. If it is above that area, application has to be made to the English Assistant-commissioner, or to the Deputy-commissioner in charge of the district, if the average of the new claim exceeds fifty. The land is then surveyed and a grant is drawn up specifying the term of years during which he shall be free from imposts. This varies according to the kind of jungle which is to be cleared away, and the kind of crops intended to be grown. The exemption is in no case for less than a year. If rice is to be grown, seven years is the longest term of rent-free tenure, but for orchard cultivation it extends to twelve years. In a few cases, where the nature of the ground necessitates, in addition to clearing away the forest growth, the digging of channels for irrigation, and the erection of dams, extension even of this long period is granted. As in France, Norway, Japan, and Switzerland, the farms are all very small, in some cases almost absurdly so. Along the old frontier the holdings averaged only about five acres, in the Rangoon district from sixteen to twenty acres is the ordinary size, but here and there are a few considerably larger. It would, however, be a great mistake to endeavour to introduce larger tenancies. It is entirely against the genius of the people, and the appearance of foreign capitalists could not be otherwise than disastrous. The present mode of cultivation is slovenly enough, and larger farms would most certainly not tend to remedy the defect, which is due in great part to the superabundance of available arable land lying waste. Burma is progressing fast enough as it is. The abundance of rich land, the facility with which rights over it can be acquired, the great demand for rice, and the ever-increasing counter demand for European goods, the fixed, though heavy taxation, the cessation of all irregular and unexpected collections, the absolute personal security enjoyed by all under the English administration: all these benefits have resulted in the trebling of the population of Lower Burma during twenty-six years since the annexation of Pegu;

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14: Brant E-5 (1949-50) 1954 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4
Indians

621 consider, because they did not want to lose the Indians as customers for their paddy stalk and as a source of manure for their gardens and fields.

563 The headman of Tadagale, when queried as to the reasons for the departure of the Indians, shrugged his shoulders and said simply that they were afraid, despite the plans for village defense, that their animals might be injured in the event of any fighting between villagers and bandits.

Within a few days, the Indians of Tadagale had all departed; and in the vacant spaces where their houses had stood, the Burmese were eagerly at work erecting buildings of their own.

Social Change

175 631 622 626 Prior to effective British rule in Lower Burma (about 1830), the local autonomous unit was the village circle, consisting of several villages under the authority of a headman. The office of headman seems to have been hereditary in fact, although elections were held. That is to say, headmen tended to be elected in a particular lineage. Rule was through personal relationship between the headman and the villagers. Under the circle headman was a council of elders, appointed by him, one from each village in the circle. Disputes were almost entirely settled by arbitration and compromise, rather than with any concern over the abstract legal right and wrong of the case.

621 Within the village, a system called 'ten-house heads' was operative. This system appears to have been operative through British times, but at least since 1948 has lost effectiveness. Tadagale houses are strung out along a main path, and the ten-house division is such that the houses belonging to one group are mostly contiguous. The head of each ten-house section acted as a kind of deputy to the headman and sat on the council of elders.

175 631 622 With the coming of British rule, much of this changed. They established a hierarchical system, in which there were, in descending order of size, nation, division, district, township, village circle, and village. All officials at each level were appointed from the capital, even down to the village level, where the headman was made an appointed civil servant. He was paid on a percentage basis of his total tax collections and fines levied. The circle headman had police power and judicial authority in petty crimes.

175 692 A judicial system was introduced by the British to replace the old informal arbitration. With an almost total disregard for indigenous institutions and customs, the British established a territorial system based upon law. The loosely structed and informal system of old gradually broke down.

669 631 182 Early in 1948 Burma gained her independence. Since that time the country has been in a state of disorganization. The civil strife has brought about an almost complete breakdown of administrative function on many levels. Certainly the ties of the village with higher units have been curtailed. One indication of this is the fact that the headman no longer submits reports with any degree of regularity to higher echelons, as was required under British rule. Even the local ten-house heads council has largely ceased to function. It exists, but is scarcely used.

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

understand that soul can doubt. And a soul is worth very many governments. 642

But when you left the central government, and came down to the management of local affairs, there was a great change. You came straight down from the king and governor to the village and its headman. There were no lords, no squires, nor ecclesiastical power wielding authority over the people. 621

Each village was to a very great extent a self-governing community composed of men free in every way. The whole country was divided into villages, sometimes containing one or two hamlets at a little distance from each other—offshoots from the parent stem. The towns, too, were divided into quarters, and each quarter had its headman. These men held their appointment-orders from the king as a matter of form, but they were chosen by their fellow-villagers as a matter of fact. Partly this headship was hereditary, not from father to son, but it might be from brother to brother, and so on. It was not usually a very coveted appointment, for the responsibility and trouble were considerable, and the pay small. It was 10 per cent. on the tax collections. And with this official as their head, the villagers managed nearly all their affairs. Their taxes, for instance, they assessed and collected themselves. The governor merely informed the headman that he was to produce ten rupees per house from his village. The villagers then appointed assessors from among themselves, and decided how much each household should pay. Thus a coolie might pay but four rupees, and a rice- 622 651 621

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

newly incorporated. I went up there with the first column that ever penetrated that country, and I remained there when, after the partial pacification of the district, the main body of the troops were withdrawn. It was a fairly exciting place to live in. To say nothing of the fever which swept down men in batches, and the trans-frontier people who were always peeping over to watch a good opportunity for a raid, my own charge simply swarmed with armed men, who seemed to rise out of the very ground—so hard was it to follow their movements—attack anywhere they saw fit, and disappear as suddenly. There was, of course, a considerable force of troops and police to suppress these insurgents, but the whole country was so roadless, so unexplored, such a tangled labyrinth of hill and forest, dotted with sparse villages, that it was often quite impossible to trace the bands who committed these attacks; and to the sick and weary pursuers it sometimes seemed as if we should never restore peace to the country.

The villages were arranged in groups, and over each group there was a headman with certain powers and certain duties, the principal of the latter being to keep his people quiet, and, if possible, protect them from insurgents.

Now, it happened that among these headmen was one named Saw Ka, who had been a free-lance in his day, but whose services were now enlisted on the side of order—or, at least, we hoped so. He was a fighting-man, and rather fond of that sort of exercise; so that I was not much surprised one day when I got a letter from him to say that his villagers

16 Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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had pursued and arrested, after a fight, a number of armed robbers, who had tried to lift some of the village cattle. The letter came to me when I was in my court-house, a tent ten feet by eight, trying a case. So, saying I would see Saw Ka's people later, and giving orders for the prisoners to be put in the lock-up, I went on with my work. When my case was finished, I happened to notice that among those sitting and waiting without my tent-door was Saw Ka himself, so I sent to call him in, and I complimented him upon his success. 'It shall be reported,' I said, 'to the Commissioner, who will, no doubt, reward you for your care and diligence in the public service.'

As I talked I noticed that the man seemed rather bewildered, and when I had finished he said that he really did not understand. He was aware, he added modestly, that he was a diligent headman, always active in good deeds, and a terror to dacoits and other evil-doers; but as to these particular robbers and this fighting he was a little puzzled.

I was considerably surprised, naturally, and I took from the table the Burmese letter describing the affair. It began, 'Your honour, I, Maung Saw Ka, headman,' etc., and was in the usual style. I handed it to Saw Ka, and told him to read it. As he read his wicked black eyes twinkled, and when he had finished he said he had not been home for a week.

'I came in from a visit to the river,' he said, 'where I have gathered for your honour some private information. I had not been here five minutes before I was called in. All this the letter

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

speaks of is news to me, and must have happened while I was away.' 175 622

'Then, who wrote the letter?' I asked.

'Ah!' he said, 'I think I know; but I will go and make sure.'

Then Saw Ka went to find the guard who had come in with the prisoners, and I dissolved court and went out shooting. After dinner, as we sat round a great bonfire before the mess, for the nights were cold, Saw Ka and his brother came to me, and they sat down beside the fire and told me all about it.

It appeared that three days after Saw Ka left his village, some robbers came suddenly one evening to a small hamlet some two miles away and looted from there all the cattle, thirty or forty head, and went off with them. The frightened owners came in to tell the headman about it, and in his absence they told his wife. And she, by virtue of the order of appointment as headman, which was in her hands, ordered the villagers to turn out and follow the dacoits. She issued such government arms as she had in the house, and the villagers went and pursued the dacoits by the cattle tracks, and next day they overtook them, and there was a fight. When the villagers returned with the cattle and the thieves, she had the letter written to me, and the prisoners were sent in, under her husband's brother, with an escort. Everything was done as well, as successfully, as if Saw Ka himself had been present. But if it had not been for the accident of Saw Ka's sudden appearance, I should probably never have known that this exploit was due to his wife; for she was

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16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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acting for her husband, and she would not have been pleased that her name should appear.

'A good wife,' I said to Saw Ka.

'Like many,' he answered.

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But in her own line she has no objection to publicity. I have said that nearly all women work, and that is so. Married or unmarried, from the age of sixteen or seventeen, almost every woman has some occupation besides her own duties. In the higher classes she will have property of her own to manage; in the lower classes she will have some trade. I cannot find that in Burma there have ever been certain occupations told off for women in which they may work, and others tabooed to them. As there is no caste for the men, so there is none for the women. They have been free to try their hands at anything they thought they could excel in, without any fear of public opinion. But nevertheless, as is inevitable, it has been found that there are certain trades in which women can compete successfully with men, and certain others in which they cannot. And these are not quite the same as in the West. We usually consider sewing to be a feminine occupation. In Burma, there being no elaborately cut and trimmed garments, the amount of sewing done is small, but that is usually done by men. Women often own and use small hand-machines, but the treadles are always used by men only. As I am writing, my Burmese orderly is sitting in the garden sewing his jacket. He is usually sewing when not sent on messages. He seems to sew very well.

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Weaving is usually done by women. Under

Addenda

U Myaing is not a member of any political party. He is concerned mainly with his work and the daily task of providing food for his family. He does not belong to any union or other organisation of workers. 621 722 622

There are about 1500 people in the refugee camp living in 14 or 15 buildings. The schoolmaster is regarded as a leader. There are two others who help him- Maung Myint and Aung Gyi. Maung Myint is 48 years old and Aung Gyi is 37. The young men in the camp also recognise these three people as elders. The three of them undertake all responsibilities for dealing with the government and making representations to the government regarding rice, milk-powder, etc. They are not paid anything in money, but get a larger share in the allotments of food, etc., made by the government to the camp. "If we get one condensed milk tin of rice, they get one basket." All the other members of the camp , including U Myaing, are satisfied with this arrangement since these three have been doing the work for the past two years. The Chief Justice of the Union, U E Maung asked them to undertake this responsibility for the camp.

In the case of thieves who are thought, the government comes to arrest the thieves. "If the people in the camp catch a thief, they would tell him and only afterwards settle with the government. It was the same back in Pathae when a thief was caught. Even if he did not die he would have to suffer terribly. In Pathae it was the task of the headman to take the offender to the police station, but here in camp the station is quite near and the householder can take him to the station by himself. 625

The government works through the school-master. It gives him recognition as a leader in the affairs of the camp. Maung Myint has to look after the welfare of two sheds and their inmates, Aung Gyi has [illegible] and Ko Ba Khant the school-master has the charge of the 621 641

23: Brant & Mi Mi Khaing E, I-5 (1949-1950)1951
AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

888 To the Burmese, long life is a great blessing and an indication of merit earned. Long life is prayed for and old age greatly idealized.

The ideal aged person is one who has successfully reared a family, has grandchildren and a certain amount of material wealth. The aged are expected to be 887 retiring and unobtrusive in their behavior. They do not go out visiting very much; they eat less food; and avoid appearing too well dressed or jeweled when attending religious observances.

An attitude of resignation characterizes the outlook of the aged person in Burmese society. It is unheard of that aged people should work: a possible ●[622] exception is the village headman, who, it is felt, should be a person of long experience. When aged people live with their children they assume the role of teachers of their grandchildren. Most of the time of elderly people is spent in activities centering around the pagodas and monasteries, organizing of religious festivals, and raising funds for the monks and charities. In fact, they take leading roles in such activities.

The elderly members of the household arise early to see that rice is cooked for the daily offering to the monks and to insure that the household altar is properly looked after. It is preferable for them to arise before dawn, for to do so is considered very meritorious.

[784] Certain of the taboos that apply to younger people, mostly those connected with death, do not apply to the aged.

761 *Death and Funeral Observances.* To the Burmese, the decline of the human body is part of the inevitable course of nature. When this occurs the soul must [775] leave. The butterfly is the symbol of life: when a person dies, "the butterfly leaves his body."

763 When death approaches, valuables, such as jewelry, are removed from the person and the death-bed, because people are reluctant to use anything with which a person dies. These things are given to the monastery. A relative chants as the person is dying, to fix his mind upon the truths of Buddhism and to divert it from worldly goods and ties of kinship.

764 As soon as death has occurred, everyone present cries and wails. Before rigor mortis sets in, relatives bathe the corpse, using a new water pot for the purpose and pouring the water over the body from foot to head, the opposite direction from that practiced by the living. If the water pot must be refilled at all, this [801] must be done an odd number of times. The pot is then put outside the house, upside down, and anyone outside the family of the deceased may take it. Then

25; Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

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370. HEADMAN MUSTERING HIS VILLAGERS.

CHAPTER VII

POLITICAL

WITH alien races planted on his soil and the watchful rivalry of the Taláing to contend with, the Burman had hourly need to guard his camp. Besides the enemies without, and their potential allies within, brigand bands of his own race had to be held in check. The chronic wars of Burman and Taláing (Mun), who were separated by no natural frontier, have left their record in the stockaded villages between Prome and Mimbu, a no-man's-land in which soldiers were impressed to fight, now on this side, now on that, and where, on being disbanded, they continued the plunder by which the armies subsisted in war. The traditions of brigandage and the exploits of noted leaders are remembered, and such enterprises are still a resort of the *vauriens* of a village or country-side when they perceive their chance—*damyá-taik sádya!* These brigands (*damyá*, gang-robbers, dacoits) lay their plans to surprise a village while the men are away at work or endeavour to create a panic by a night attack and so obtain their booty without risk of an encounter. An occasional gang might

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371. BURMAN OUTPOST STOCKADE.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

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372. VILLAGE ELDERS IN CONCLAVE.

disperse as quickly as it was recruited or else it might develop into a band under a regular leader (*Bô*) and become the scourge of the country, rapidly attacking points separated by days' journeys. Against such bands the villagers combine and keep guard; torches are ready for night alarms. But when the brigands are too strong, the villagers have no choice but to enter into league with them and pay blackmail if they would not experience the horrors of barbarous war. At present brigandage is of very sporadic occurrence. Travellers are perfectly safe.

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Throughout Burma every man was liable to serve in war. He would have his own sabre and pike and would be provided with musket and ammunition, but no further accoutrements. Latterly the king's body-guards wore a sort of uniform (No. 9). Cannon are mentioned as early as 1350, and a century later, matchlocks were in use. Cæsar Frederick in 1569 speaks of pikes and arquebuses and good cannon. When disbanded, the soldiers had to surrender their muskets, but numbers were smuggled away, to add to the rigour of the guerilla waged by brigands and the severity of the villagers' retaliation.

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372. BURMAN OFFICIAL RECEIVING APPLICANTS.

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The military leader is called *Bô;* the civil governor or minister of the king, *Wun*, which means a burden or trust. The former might be a young man, the latter but rarely so. Age and influence are almost synonymous in Burma. If the elders—headmen, *lôdyî*—are agreed upon a thing, it is done. The village elders represent the fundamental substratum of government in Burma. They are consulted by the officials on matters affecting the people, whose natural, if unofficial,

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

374. OFFICIAL PASSING THE STREET.

representatives they are, attaining their position by the tacit suffrages of the public. Their sphere is not defined nor are their numbers fixed in any way. Influence is naturally centred in a few of the ablest, but these are not permitted to usurp it for themselves. The loyalty of the villagers rests on the reciprocal regard of the elders for the sentiments of the community; the *lûdyis*, though they moderate popular feeling, never take an unpopular course. The affairs which they manage are the local festivals and the religious undertakings in which the public life of the country centres and in which conflicting aims have to be conciliated. The laying out of ordinary irrigation channels and other village works are arranged by the *lûdyis*. They witness marriages and divorces, and generally regulate the social life of the people. A tacit agreement, parallel to that between the villagers and their headmen, bound the king and the people, whose sentiments were reflected by officials drawn from their midst.

If, not content with the consideration accruing through age and natural gifts for leadership, and with managing a business of his own, our Burman aspired to a public career, he might enter official life by attaching himself to the suite of some functionary. This he would do at first in a menial capacity, and, as he found favour, he might become secretary, deputy, and eventually attain to the chief dignities. A scion of royalty just out of his teens would be given a town or province to live on (*myoza*), as well as to govern by the help of deputies and advisers. But a son of the people would be gray before he climbed to such a position. The *myoza* had to remit a

375. BURMAN JUDGE PROCEEDING TO COURT.